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May 6, 1957

Herewith stenographic transcript of speech by M. F. J. Goedhart at the Council of Europe Consultative Assembly on May 2. It is essentially a condensation of Committee's report, and repeats all its major points. Transcript begins:

The President: I call M. Goedhart.

M. Goedhart: (Netherlands) Mr. President, the Committee on non-Represented Nations has lately undertaken an investigation into the accusations made against Radio Free Europe, which have become very sharp since the time of the Hungarian revolution of October and November last year. The Committee charged me with the honourable task of reporting to the Assembly on this investigation. I have risen to speak in the general debate in order to give the experience of our Committee.

Radio Free Europe has been accused of having inspired the Hungarian revolution and having promised the Hungarian people military aid from the West. As the greater part of Radio Free Europe broadcasts are transmitted from Western Germany, the German Federal Republic has undertaken an investigation into the allegations. All tape-recordings of Hungarian transmissions during October and November have been checked word for word. This check has proved that the allegations made are entirely unfounded. Dr. Adenauer, the German Federal Chancellor, made this statement at a press conference at Bonn on 25th January 1957.

A representative of the Government of the German Federal Republic went into the matter more closely at a session of your Committee which was held in Munich on 11th, 12th and 13th March. He informed your Committee of the way in which the investigation was conducted and of the correspondence exchanged about this between the German Government and Radio Free Europe. This further explanation from the German Government has also cleared Radio Free Europe from all blame. The allegations are completely unfounded.

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It goes without saying that the information which our committee received from the German Federal Government was for us sufficient proof and relieved us from the necessity of checking the tape-recordings. We did, however, pay several visits to Radio Free Europe, where we had the opportunity of exchanging views with the Radio Free Europe experts. I should like to take this occasion to thank the Radio Free Europe staff for their great kindness and courtesy to us in allowing us to see all we wanted. We saw at work Radio Free Europe's monitoring service, which makes verbatim reports of and analyzes the broadcasts from the Communist world. We also made acquaintance with Radio Free Europe's extensive work in the field of documentation. The most important Communist newspapers and magazines which appear in Eastern Europe are read and analyzed by Radio Free Europe. This work is being performed by experts, mainly highly skilled people of Eastern European origin.

The Radio Free Europe programs are transmitted in six languages -- Polish, Czech and Slovak, Hungarian, Rumanian and Bulgarian. Radio Free Europe's 29 transmitters are practically continuously on the air. A staff of 1,400 persons are concerned in the work of Radio Free Europe. I have personally studied a program for 24 hours. A very important part of this program consists of news services in which telegrams from all the large news agencies are transmitted. It is, therefore, not propaganda but objective news. The news services also give reviews of the foremost American and European newspapers. Many broadcasts are devoted to refuting the lying campaigns in the Communist press. In this way Radio Free Europe daily provides the listeners behind the Iron Curtain with factual knowledge and arguments. Much attention is paid to cultural and artistic life in Europe and America. There are book reviews to acquaint the people behind the Iron Curtain with the most important publications of the free world. There are also programs bringing fashion and sports news from the Western world. All of these are eagerly listened to, and there is much evidence for this.

Radio Free Europe also broadcasts warnings directed against certain persons in the Communist police and against commanders of Communist prisons and concentration camps who are known to be guilty of maltreatment and other crimes against prisoners.

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Radio Free Europe has for years devoted much attention to the work of the Council of Europe, and rightly so, for behind the Iron Curtain there is a great and growing interest in the Council of Europe. About 100 million people, Europeans as we are, are living in the European Soviet colonies, and they eagerly look forward to every scrap of news from which it appears Europe is moving towards unification and is working hard to achieve it.

The population of the Soviet colonies are still expecting help from the free world and every report which tells them that the West is not forgetting the European victims of the Kremlin and not letting itself be deceived by the maneuvers of the Kremlin is "hot news" for them. All this information is furnished by Radio Free Europe.

Your Committee has learned about this work with satisfaction and respect, and we are most anxious to give public and unanimous testimony of our feelings. These broadcasts of Radio Free Europe are a strong and important weapon in the struggle against Communist dictatorship.

To speak frankly, I must say that it is a rather astonishing situation that this useful and effective organization which is waging a daily battle for a free and united Europe is in fact an American institution. You will understand that I am not blaming the Americans, who established Radio Free Europe. On the contrary, we are extremely grateful for this American initiative. A number of American citizens set up a private organization and they are raising millions of dollars to finance Radio Free Europe, but I feel a little embarrassed that we Europeans did not take this initiative ourselves and that in this respect we are neglecting our political tasks. The German Federal Republic granted Radio Free Europe a license to operate on German territory. Germany thereby rendered an important service to the people behind the Iron Curtain. But for the rest, Europe stands aside and does not concern itself with Radio Free Europe. This is an unsatisfactory situation.

Some people have suggested that Radio Free Europe should be put under German management and that the German Bundestag should gain control of Radio Free Europe. Your Committee does not agree with these

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suggestions. The nature of the work of an organization like Radio Free Europe entails that it would be highly undesirable for a government or parliament to be responsible for it. Governments and parliaments can bear no responsibilities for newspapers; no more can they be directly responsible for radio broadcasts. It would put the United States of America in a very awkward position if they were held responsible for every work broadcast by Radio Free Europe. The same holds good for the German Government and for the Council of Europe. It is a good thing, I think, that Radio Free Europe is private organization, and I think it should remain so. What we consider wrong is that Radio Free Europe is a completely American private organization. I think it would be better if we Europeans could also take an interest in it and if the financial and moral responsibility for Radio Free Europe could be shared by some independent European personalities and supported by European public opinion.

I do not think it is this Assembly's business to make proposals in this field. Such proposals could come only from the Free Europe Committee in New York. Your Committee has therefore confined itself to this suggestion.

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